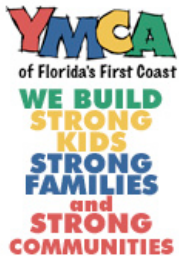


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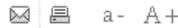
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## Council decision was wise



Bob Henderson | February 18, 2010 | 4 Comments

The Green Cove Springs City Council has adopted a resolution opposing the impending Florida Constitutional Amendment titled – for the moment - Hometown Democracy." And well they should.

If adopted, it will be the old, old story of act in haste and repent at leisure.

It is not the first time that presumably well-meaning people have come up with a brilliant idea that simply does not consider all the ramifications; remember the bullet train to nowhere and the hysterical concern for pregnant pigs?

Hometown Democracy is soon to be renamed "Florida Citizens for Lower Taxes and Economic Development, Inc." Now isn't that a title to be conjured with? Every time I see something like that, I turn and run the other way.

Everyone would like lower taxes; that's the genius of the name change. But, alas, having been burned before, Florida voters should know that just because the title of a voter initiated amendment promises something, it doesn't mean they're going to het it.

Basically, the proposed amendment would require local governments to conduct a referendum before adopting any comprehensive land use changes. Doesn't sound bad on the surface of it, does it? And that's just what the promoters are hoping for; "Sounds good to me, I guess I'll vote for it." And the unwary elector, unaware of the pitfalls that lurk beneath the surface, falls into the trap.

Now the local government – cities and counties – face the expense of conducting additional elections to satisfy the referendum requirement every time it receives a request for land use amendment.

But, you say, isn't more citizen involvement desirable? Yes, of course it is. And citizens are given every opportunity to become involved in the process. After extensive and in-depth considering by planning departments, he request goes before the planning and zoning board. The boards' meetings are open and the public is encouraged to attend and be heard but the board play to an empty house month after month.

And the scenario is repeated when the matter comes before the governing body. Applicants are present to defend their request and the only others present are, perhaps, neighbors of the proposed changed who demand, "Not in my back yard."

And that seems to be the extent of public involvement; those with an interest are present; those who have no interest, aren't, but they will show up to vote against any proposal that they perceive as benefiting development because, to them, all development is bad.

In brief, this amendment will hamstring local governments and make it impossible for them to do the job they were elected to do.

There is another unexpected consequence, too. Councilperson Bob Page said

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that studies have shown that, if passed, the amendment will cost the State of Florida 360,000 jobs. That's a pretty high price to pay for something that is supposed to save money.



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Excellent  Very Good  Good  Fair  Poor

### Visitor Comments »

**Bett Willett**

February 18th 2010 -  
4:06PM

Um, duh, get your facts right, Florida Hometown Democracy has not changed its name; the op-ponents of Amendment 4 have renamed their "Floridians for Smarter Growth" group as people are wise to the fact that they are for dumber growth and are now calling themselves "Florida Cit-izens for Lower Taxes and Economic Development, Inc." and run away you should! Florida residents are fed up with the poor job their elected officials have done controlling devel-opment. In fact they have not controlled it. Dr. Starnes, the former head of Florida's State Plan-ning Office is in favor of Amendment 4. Look at the reasons Dr. Starnes gives, for supporting Amendment 4. He calls what we have now "Kneejerk, hurriedly and secretly enacted changes". He says "the idea that growth management inhibits economic growth is a silly observation". He is a planner, and he is for Amendment 4! He writes that the POLITICAL process needs a serious shake-up, and Amendment 4 is it! About the claim that there will be "thousands of referendums on technical issues", this is usually said when the person is waiving a giant book which is supposed to be the land use code, and try-ing to scare us into thinking we will have to have a gazillion page ballot. Actually there will be very few votes. Comprehensive Land Use Plan changes are voted for in one vote by commis-sions as they will be by voters. And there will be no need for special elections; the votes will be at our regularly held elections. Let's look at 2 of Broward's largest cities, In 2006 Ft. Lauderdale had one change to their comprehensive plan, in 2007 they had 1 and in 2008 they had 1, In 2006 Mayor Ortis's Pembroke Pines had 7, 1 in 2007, and 2 in 2008. You don't count each little part of an amendment separately and call it an amendment. Each amendment approved as an ordinance will go to the ballot for one vote. The numbers of those amendments are very manageable.

**MWilloughby**

February 19th 2010 -  
9:27AM

Good grief can you not get the facts straight. The writer above is exactly right, and if you look at the members of group formally known as the Citizens for Smarter Growth it's patrons are the development machine and their leeches. This is the only thing they have to fight Amendment 4 with, misinformation and misrepresentation. Current comp plans allow for another 100 million people to move into the state with residential construction. A4 does not effect the current comp plan, it effects only changes to it. That is hardly anti growth.

**clay lady**

February 19th 2010 -  
10:23AM

Clay Today and Bob Henderson seem to have problems getting anything right. Greg Walsh--Leave Bob in the pasture and pay attention to your publication.

**Wrong Again**

February 22nd 2010 -  
8:47AM

Let's hope no one at Clay Today refers again to ignorant or uneducated voters. And let's hope no one depends on Clay Today and Bob Henderson to become an educated voter. This kind of opinion based on an outright mistake should be embarrassing for anyone associated with Clay Today.

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